

Division of Marketing
Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) Program
1989 Grant Final Report

Grant Number 04021

Grant Title Diversification of the Forage Seed Industry in Wisconsin (Phase 1)

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DIVERSIFICATION OF THE FORAGE SEED INDUSTRY

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Deer Creek Seeds' diversification of the forage seed industry in Wisconsin, is a research project to identify adapted species of turf grass which can profitably be grown for seed in Wisconsin.

HOW THE GRANT PROGRAM HAS HELPED THE PROJECT

The funds made available through the Agriculture Development and Diversification (ADD) grant program have allowed us to initiate the turf seed research. The possibility that turf seed production could be a viable industry in Wisconsin has long been suspected. Prior to the announcement of the ADD program, time and funds were not available to start such a research project.

BENEFITS TO FARMER/AGRIBUSINESS

Positive research results proving turf seed production to be profitable in Wisconsin will identify a whole new opportunity for Wisconsin farmers. For established seed producers, this represents a chance to diversify into a consumer driven market. For those farmers willing to learn new practices and techniques, this will be an opportunity to contract acreages for seed and have an additional source of income.

Agribusinesses in areas of production will have the opportunity to supply needed inputs of an intensely managed crop. In addition to the fertilizers and various non-cultural inputs, the need for specialized machinery will exist.

POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

Worldwide, turf seed represents a \$750,000,000 industry. The potential economic impact on Wisconsin could be extensive. In the short term, several factors stand between us and any benefits. First, is the lack of knowledge about the economics of turf seed. Assuming however, that we can profitably grow these seeds, the major factor will be the willingness of the Wisconsin farmer to seize the opportunity. We certainly have the land, equipment and needed inputs. If the farmer does not see the possibility then impact will be minimal. If, on the other hand, we become aggressive, then for each 1 percent of this market we command, Wisconsin will bring in \$7,500,000 in new income.